



US 20160185596A1

(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Manenti et al.(10) **Pub. No.: US 2016/0185596 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Jun. 30, 2016**(54) **SYNGAS PRODUCTION BY CO₂
REDUCTION PROCESS****Publication Classification**(71) Applicant: **POLITECNICO DI MILANO**, Milano
(IT)(51) **Int. Cl.**
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Pierucci**, Milano (IT); **Lucio Molinari**,
Milano (IT)(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **C01B 3/06** (2013.01)(21) Appl. No.: **14/907,573**(22) PCT Filed: **Jul. 31, 2014**(86) PCT No.: **PCT/IB2014/063593**

§ 371 (c)(1),

(2) Date: **Jan. 26, 2016**(30) **Foreign Application Priority Data**

Aug. 2, 2013 (IT) MI2013A001322

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A process for producing synthesis gas (syngas) comprising the endothermic reaction between CO₂ and H₂S, wherein the energetic supply is provided by the exothermic oxidation of a small portion of H₂S to SO₂ according to the following reaction scheme: R2: H₂S+1.5O₂→SO₂+H₂O said process being carried out according to the following overall theoretical reaction scheme R1, not taking into account the aforementioned exothermic reaction R2, R1:CO₂+2H₂S→CO+H₂+S₂+H₂O wherein the amount of fed oxygen is comprised between 5% and 25% by volume over the total volume of fed reactants gaseous mixture.

Figure 1

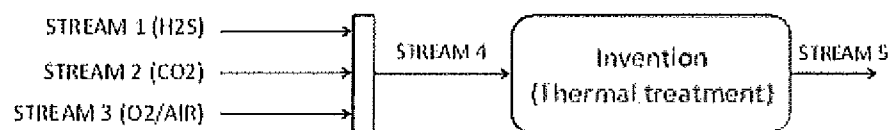


Figure 2

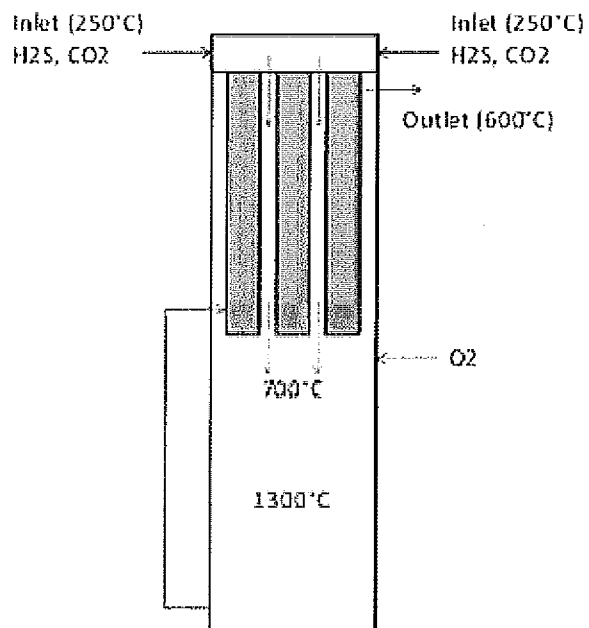


Figure 3

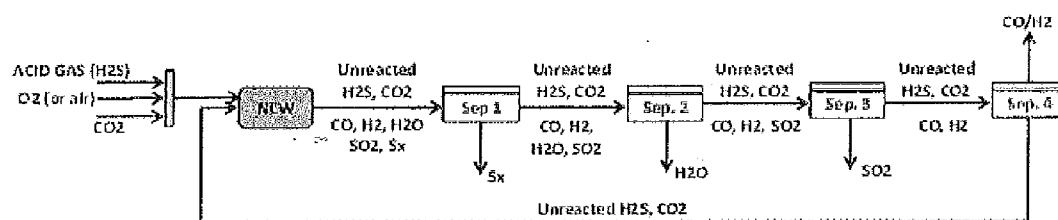


Figure 4

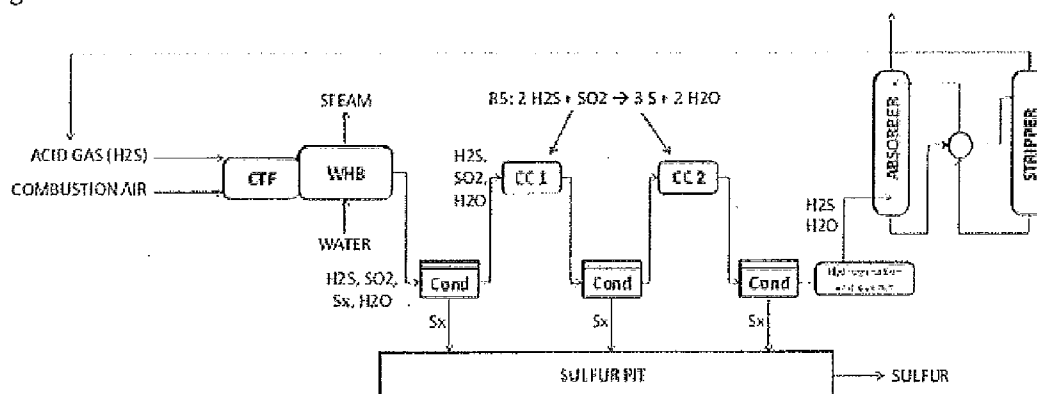


Figure 5

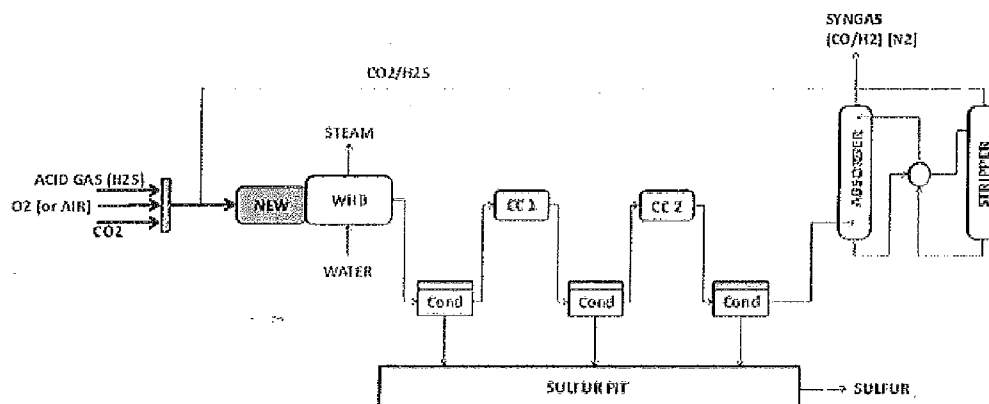


Figure 6

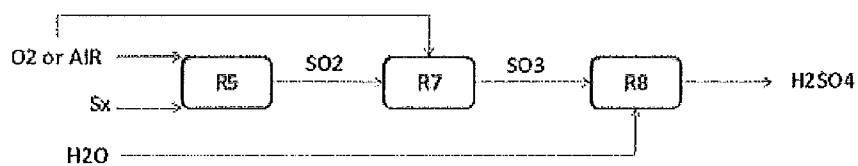


Figure 7

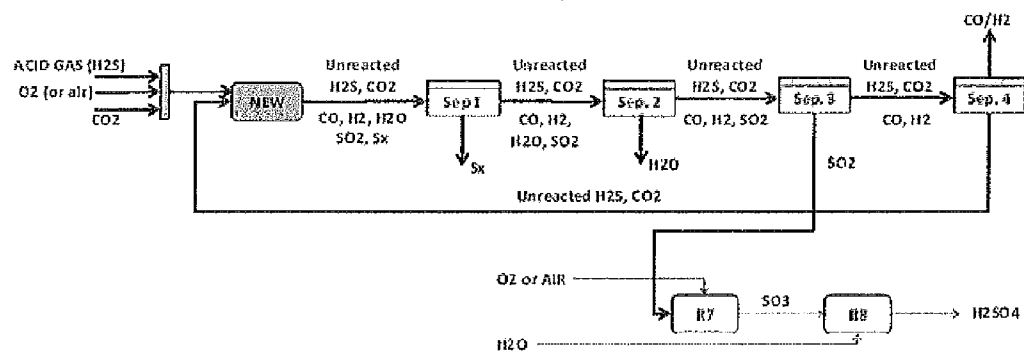


Figure 8

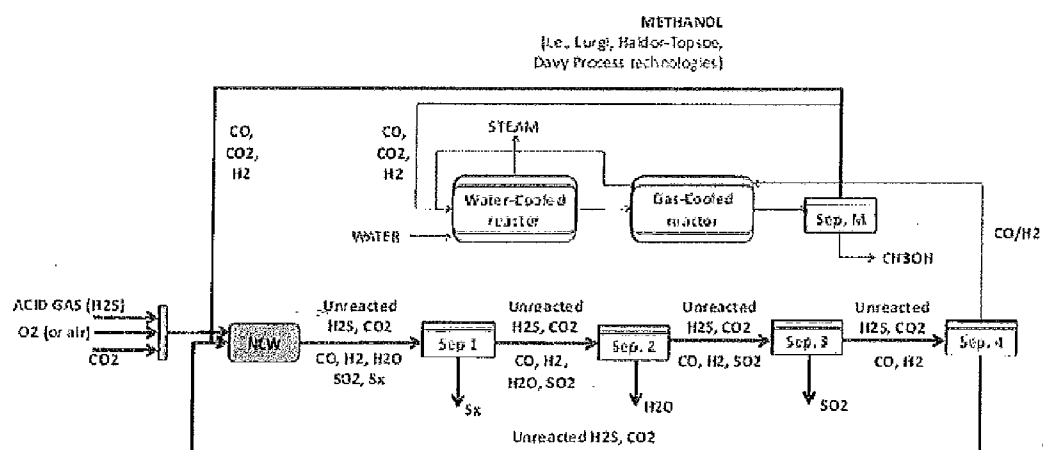


Figure 9

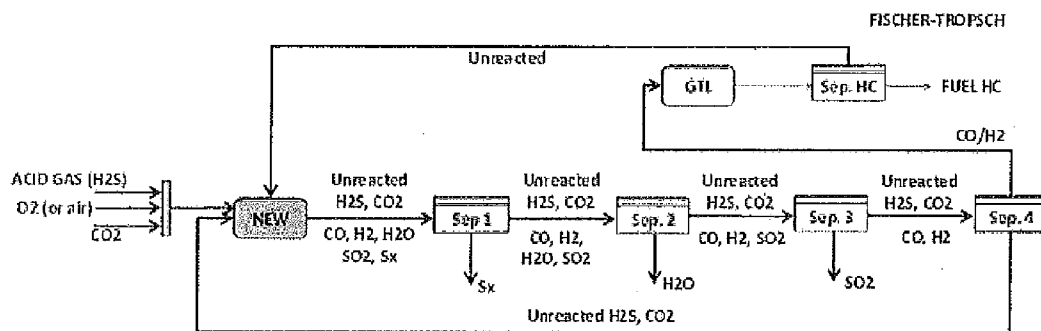
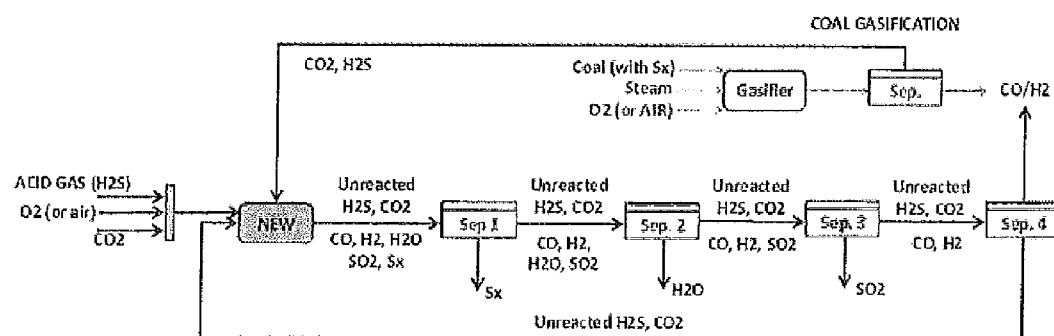


Fig.10



SYNGAS PRODUCTION BY CO₂ REDUCTION PROCESS

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates a production process of synthesis gas starting from CO₂ and H₂S, said reactants being generated by industrial conventional processes or separated by conventional industrial purification processes.

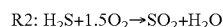
BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Synthesis gas (syngas) is mainly obtained by partial oxidation of hydrocarbon, usually methane. This process is represented by a cathedral oven provided with tubes containing a catalyst through which methane and steam flow to convert these reactants into CO and H₂, i.e. syngas. The purpose of the oven is to heat the tubes by heat radiation to reach the reaction temperatures up to 800° C. Syngas is then cooled down and separated down stream the oven. In alternative syngas is produced from coal gasification. The gasification reactor is fed with coal oxygen and steam to achieve a syngas stream by partial oxidation reaction of the coal itself. Nowadays gasification is technologically feasible also for biomasses and agricultural/industrial residues or solid urban waste, but substantially with the same finality to partially oxidize the reactants in order to obtain syngas.

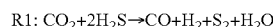
SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0003] The Applicant has found a process for producing synthesis gas (syngas) comprising the endothermic reaction between CO₂ and H₂S.

[0004] The energetic supply of this syngas production process is provided by the exothermic oxidation of a portion of H₂S to SO₂ according to the following reaction scheme:



[0005] This syngas production process is carried out according to the following overall theoretical reaction scheme R1, not taking into account the aforementioned R2 reaction



[0006] This process is further characterized in that the amount of fed oxygen is comprised between 5% and 25% by volume over the total volume of fed reactants gaseous mixture.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0007] FIG. 1 represents a block diagram of a thermal reactor used in the process of the invention.

[0008] FIG. 2 represents a scheme of a regenerative thermal reactor utilized in the process of the invention in the presence of oxygen or air.

[0009] FIG. 3 represents a block diagram of an independent productive unit to carry out the process of the invention.

[0010] FIG. 4 represents a block diagram of a conventional Claus type productive unit for sulfur recovery.

[0011] FIG. 5 represents a block diagram of a productive unit to carry out the process of the invention integrated with a Claus type catalytic train.

[0012] FIG. 6 represents a block diagram of a conventional type productive unit for producing sulfuric acid

[0013] FIG. 7 represents a block diagram of a productive unit for carrying out the process of the invention integrated with the productive unit for producing sulfuric acid.

[0014] FIG. 8 represents a block diagram of a production unit for carrying out the process of the invention coupled with a production unit destined to methanol production.

[0015] FIG. 9 represents a block diagram of a production unit for carrying out the process of the invention associated with a production unit for producing gasoline/gasoil according to Fischer Tropsch gas-to-liquids processes.

[0016] FIG. 10 represents a block diagram of a production unit for carrying out the process of the invention coupled with a production unit for producing syngas from coal gasification.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0017] For the purposes of the invention the wording “overall theoretical reaction scheme” means the general and stoichiometric scheme of reactants conversion. This scheme and all associated stoichiometry may vary according to the reactor methodologies as well the operating conditions thereof.

[0018] For the purposes of the present invention the definition “catalytic train of the Claus unit” means the series of catalytic converters and condensers for sulfur recovery that in Claus unit are positioned downstream the thermal section.

[0019] For the purposes of the present invention the wording “oxygen” means pure oxygen, air, oxygen-enriched air, combustion air etc. Preferably oxygen is pure oxygen or air.

[0020] For the purposes of the present invention the wording “operating unit” means a plant for carrying out the process of the invention comprising a reactor at least one separation section, separating syngas from the other components of flue gases leaving said thermal or regenerative reactor, and least one recycling section of the unconverted reactants.

[0021] For the purposes of the present invention the wording “independent operating unit” means an operating unit to carry out the process according to the present invention, wherein the at least one separating section and/or at least one recycling section is apart from those of other operative units destined to different industrial processes.

[0022] For the purposes of the present invention for “small portion of H₂S” it is intended the volume % of H₂S directly reacting with O₂ according to the aforementioned reaction R2, therefore (depending on the volume of O₂ entering the reactor) calculated on the total volume of fed H₂S.

[0023] For the purposes of the present invention the wording “efficient regeneration” means that the regenerative section of the reactor is able to significantly preheat the feed up to temperature close to the conditions of the thermal section of the reactor (i.e. over 1000° C.).

[0024] I) Production of Syngas in the Presence of Oxygen/Air

[0025] The process of the invention is generally carried out by feeding oxygen/air in a reactor in amounts of from 5 to 25% by volume mixture based on the total gaseous mixture sent to the reactor, in order to sustain energetically the syngas endothermic production via CO₂ reduction, preferably in the range of 5% to 15% when the regeneration is very efficient. The process of the invention is carried out in a reactor, such as a regenerative thermal reactor or a thermal reactor, although the former is more preferred.

[0026] The regenerative thermal reactor (FIG. 2), in which syngas is produced, is preferably a tubular plug flow reactor (PFR) for the regenerative section and PFR for the thermal section internally covered with refractory and preferably pro-

vided downstream with a waste heat boiler. According to a particularly preferred embodiment this reactor section is a thermal furnace covered with refractory and provided downstream with a waste heat boiler, in which medium/high pressure vapours are generated at the shell side by reactor flue gases that are cooled down entering the waste heat boiler at the tubes side.

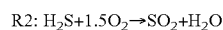
[0027] The regenerative thermal reactor preferably used in the process of the invention may have different configurations with reactants feed positioned in one or different reactor areas.

[0028] The process according to the present invention may also be carried out in a thermal reactor, that is a PFR, through which gases pass with a turbulent flow and provided downstream with a waste heat boiler, like that previously described.

[0029] The reaction temperatures of the process according to the present invention are preferably comprised between 800 and 1550° C.

[0030] More preferably the reaction temperatures are comprised between 1300 and 1550° C. when a high sequestering therefore a high conversion of CO₂ and H₂S is required, whereas the process is carried out at lower temperatures (900-1100° C.) when the target is to obtain a relatively high H₂/CO ratio.

[0031] Fed oxygen sustains thermally the reaction R1 through the combustion of small part of H₂S according to the following reaction scheme:



[0032] The exercise pressure is preferably comprised between 1 and 2 absolute atm., more preferably between 1.5 and 2 atm.

[0033] The contact times are preferably between 0.1 and 3 s. more preferably between 0.5 and 1.5 s.

[0034] These parameters were obtained by carrying out a simulation we describe herein below only for illustrative but not limitative purposes.

[0035] The regenerative thermal reactor, or in alternative the thermal reactor used in the process according to the present invention is simulated by using complex kinetic schemes (Manenti et al., Multiscale modelling of Claus thermal furnace and waste heat boiler using detailed kinetics, Computers and Chemical Engineering, 59, 219-225, 2013), comprising 2426 chemical reactions and 142 chemical species. The simulation cannot be conducted by using commercial software, since the main processes simulators are not provided with complex kinetic schemes. Therefore the present simulation is carried out with the abovementioned tools previously in situ validated.

[0036] The thermal reactor is represented schematically in FIG. 1. The simulation data are reported in the following table 1.

TABLE 1

Thermal reactor				
DATA				
Temp in ¹	° C.	250	250	
Pressure	bar	1.5	1.5	
CO ₂	kmol	10	10	
H ₂ S	kmol	30	30	
O ₂	kmol	11.81	5.79	

TABLE 1-continued

Thermal reactor				
RESULTS				
React. Temp. ²	° C.	1500	1000	
CO ₂	kmol	5.09	7.81	
H ₂ S	kmol	3.58	18.29	
S ₂	kmol	10.90	4.14	
H ₂	kmol	5.37	3.67	
CO	kmol	4.80	1.90	
SO ₂	kmol	3.68	2.89	
H ₂ O	kmol	20.86	7.97	
COS	kmol	0.11	0.29	

¹ Inlet Temperature

² Reactor Temperature

[0037] An alternative configuration of the reactor is the proposed regenerative (energetically integrated) thermal reactor and is schematically represented in FIG. 2. The reactor receives CO₂ and H₂S reactant streams at a relatively low temperature (e.g. 250° C.). This feedstock is preheated (e.g., up to 700° C.) with flue gases leaving the furnace. Once the above temperature is reached, oxygen is fed to further increase the temperature up to the desired value (1300-1550° C.). Flue gases are then cooled down, by exchanging heat with inlet gases. In this way a significant heat recovery is achieved, and the oxygen amount required to sustain the production of syngas is decidedly lower than that required in the thermal reactor.

[0038] The simulation data for the regenerative reactor are reported in the following table 2.

TABLE 2

Regenerative reactor				
DATA				
Temp. In ¹	° C.	700	700	
Pressure	bar	1.5	1.5	
CO ₂	kmol	10	10	
H ₂ S	kmol	30	30	
O ₂	kmol	9.19	3.47	
RESULTS				
React. Temp ²	° C.	1500	1000	
CO ₂	kmol	4.47	7.44	
H ₂ S	kmol	4.32	19.79	
S ₂	kmol	11.25	3.98	
H ₂	kmol	6.32	3.99	
CO	kmol	5.40	2.23	
SO ₂	kmol	2.25	1.67	
H ₂ O	kmol	19.16	6.16	
COS	kmol	0.13	0.33	

¹ Inlet Temperature

² Reactor Temperature

[0039] Optimal conditions change at different operating conditions as reported hereinbelow for illustrative but not limitative purposes.

[0040] The following data are related to the proposed reaction conducted at 1300° C., 1.8 bar and 1 s residence time. Whenever the feedstock temperature is lower than the reaction temperature, additional O₂ is needed to increase the temperature itself.

[0041] Condition 1-High H₂S Content

T = 1300° C.	P = 1.8 bar	Residence time = 1 s
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[0042] Molar Fraction Inlet: 82% H₂S, 10% CO₂, 8% O₂

[0043] Output: 24.4% v syngas, H₂/CO Ratio=3, no production of SO₂, conversion of H₂S=60% v and CO₂=70% v

[0044] Since no SO₂ is generated, there is a high selectivity towards H₂ and the process is not necessary to be associated with plants directed to exhaust SO₂ like for example that occurring in the Claus catalytic train or in the sulphuric acid production as reported later on.

[0045] Condition 2-High CO₂ Content

T = 1300° C.	P = 1.8 bar	Residence time = 1 s
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[0046] Molar Fraction Inlet: 31% H₂S, 62% CO₂, 7% O₂

[0047] Output: H₂/CO Ratio=0.2, H₂S/SO₂ Ratio=1, Conversion of H₂S=87% v and CO₂=35.5% v

[0048] Production of SO₂: possibility to couple it, for instance, with Claus catalytic converters and/or sulfuric acid plants as reported later on.

[0049] Oxygen quantity is less due to the amount of CO₂ that works as Oxygen basin for H₂S oxidation.

[0050] Condition 3-Optimal Claus Catalytic Converter Matching

T = 1300° C.	P = 1.8 bar	Residence time = 1 s
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[0051] Molar Fraction Inlet: 40% H₂S, 52% CO₂, 8% O₂

[0052] Output: H₂S/CO₂ Ratio=2 (Claus optimal condition), Conversion of H₂S=85% v and CO₂=40% v, 21.5% v syngas, H₂/CO Ratio=0.35

[0053] 2. Separation of Syngas from Other Reactor Flue Gases

[0054] Flue gases coming from the reactor are cooled down and syngas is separated from the other compounds namely H₂S, CO₂, SO₂, H₂O and S₂. For this purpose the process of the invention is preferably carried out in a productive unit that, besides the regenerative thermal reactor, it further comprises at least one of conversion/condensation/compression sections allowing the separation of flue gases from said reactors. This separation can be realized in different ways, depending on the use of the different streams that, besides syngas, may be utilized industrially, and the production site, wherein the production unit for carrying out the process according to the invention is integrated with.

[0055] Herein below for illustrative but not limitative purposes are reported some preferred embodiments of productive units for conducting the process according to the present invention, said operating units being independent or integrated with operating units destined to other industrial processes.

[0056] In FIG. 3 a preferred embodiment is depicted of an independent productive unit used for carrying out the process according to the present invention.

[0057] At the inlet of the reactor, indicated with "NEW" in the figure, preferably a regenerative thermal reactor, acid gas (mainly H₂S), CO₂ and oxygen (O₂) or combustion air or other fuel mixture are fed. In the regenerative thermal reactor CO₂ reduction to CO occurs, with H₂ formation through H₂S

pyrolysis, thereby producing syngas. S₂, SO₂ and H₂O form as by products. Flue gases are cooled down in a waste heat boiler not represented in the figure. Cooling down must be sufficiently quick to avoid any recombination reactions among flue gases (Manenti et al., Design of SRU thermal reactor and waste heat boiler considering recombination reactions, *Procedia Engineering*, 42, 414-421, 2012). After cooling down, separation of elemental sulfur is performed in September 1 through condensation. Sulfur is then sent to sulfur pit and thereafter sold or used for other processes (e.g. for the preparation of sulfuric acid). The residual stream contains unreacted H₂S and CO₂, SO₂, H₂O and syngas. By subsequent treatments occurring separately in September 2, September 3 and September 4 or occurring in the same separators combined among each other, it is possible to purify syngas. Before condensing water, sulfur vapours must be hydrogenated, to avoid that sulfur solidifies, thereby obstructing pipelines.

[0058] SO₂ can be used in sulfuric acid production processes. As syngas production is always associated with a compression thereof at different tens of atmospheres, no further operating cost is required if SO₂ condensation occurs by pressure increase. For example syngas is compressed up to 80 bar or more for methanol synthesis (Manenti et al., Considerations on the Steady-state Modeling of Methanol Synthesis Fixed-Bed Reactor, *Chemical Engineering Science*, 66(2), 152-162, 2011).

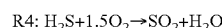
[0059] Compression favours also the last separation phase of syngas from unconverted H₂S and CO₂ and optional other acid by products by conventional washing with (amine) solvent, able to sequester H₂S and CO₂ and release syngas. Sequestered H₂S and CO₂, once recovered from the solvent are recycled at the reactor.

[0060] The process of the invention is able to exhaust and increase the values of two by products like H₂S and CO₂ having a strong environmental impact, thereby producing syngas with different CO/H₂ ratios; in addition the process of the invention, besides being energetically sustainable shows high conversion yields.

[0061] As above seen, the separations for the purification of syngas occur without additional compression costs if compared to conventional technologies of separation processes (amine washing), favouring therefore the insertion/integration of the process of the invention in conventional processes, as reported herein below.

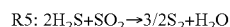
[0062] 1. Sulfur Recovery Unit with Syngas Coproduction

[0063] The process of the invention is particularly useful for increasing the performances and profits of sulfur recovery units. The typical scheme of a sulfur recovery unit is depicted in FIG. 4. The acid gas to be treated is fed with non stoichiometric combustion air to a Claus furnace wherein part of H₂S is converted to SO₂ according to the following reaction.



[0064] The reaction is generally conducted at temperatures higher than 1000° C., with temperatures that may be higher than 1500° C. in the presence of ammonia fractions in the acid gas stream. When leaving Claus furnace flue gas is cooled down to 300° C. in a waste heat boiler with production of medium pressure vapor. A condenser downstream the waste heat boiler completes cool down by separating sulfur by condensation. Condensed sulfur is sent to liquid sulfur pit. The stream, thus free from sulfur, mainly consisting of H₂S,

SO₂ and H₂O enters the first Claus catalytic converter CC1, wherein the following reaction occurs:



[0065] This is an equilibrium reaction, requiring to be performed a multiple step process, with intermediate thermal treatment and subsequent intermediate removal of the product (S₂). With 2-3 catalytic steps yields higher than 90% can be reached. Tail residue, usually contains a small percentage of unconverted H₂S (for example when molar ratios H₂S/SO₂ higher than 2 are present in flue gases leaving Claus furnace). This residue is then washed with solvent for residual H₂S abatement. H₂S is then released from the stripper head and upstream recycled at Claus furnace feed, in addition to freshly fed acid gas.

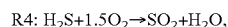
[0066] The process of the invention allows to use to the best the technology of conventional Claus process and producing syngas with decidedly low costs. A possible application is represented in FIG. 5. Flue gases coming from syngas reactor NEW are sent to the classic catalytic train converter of the Claus process (sulfur unit recovery) upstream or downstream the first condenser Cond.

[0067] After the first sulfur removal, the mixture containing CO₂, H₂S, SO₂, H₂O and syngas is fed at the catalytic train CC1-CC2, wherein the Claus reaction R5 occurs. Syngas is inert both on the catalytic bed (not titanium based catalyst) and in intermediate sulfur condensing and removal operating conditions. Therefore flue gases coming from the third condenser Cond are unconverted CO₂, H₂S and syngas. Syngas is recovered at the top of the amine washing column (ABSORBER in FIG. 5), whereas H₂S and CO₂ are recovered at the top of the stripper (STRIPPER in the same figure) and recycled upstream the reactor. The operating unit to carry out the process of the invention integrated with Claus sulfur recovery unit (in this specific example only with Claus catalytic train) allows to exhaust CO₂ by H₂S reduction, thereby coproducing syngas and elemental sulfur.

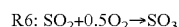
[0068] In FIGS. 4 and 5 the hydrogenation reactor operating the sulfur vapours and sulfured by products reduction and the quench tower performing cooling down of flue gases and process water condensation upstream the absorber are not reported.

[0069] 2. Sulfuric Acid Production Unit

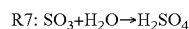
[0070] A production unit of sulfuric acid is schematically represented in FIG. 6. In particular the production process encompasses the primary oxidation of sulfured compounds, for example acid gas (H₂S) according to the above mentioned global reaction



[0071] The successive secondary oxidation of SO₂:



[0072] and finally SO₃ absorption in water:



[0073] The process according to the present invention may be integrated with the aforementioned process. The insertion of an independent operating unit to carry out the process of the invention in a possible revamp is reported in FIG. 7. In this case the thermal furnace of direct oxidation of H₂S to SO₂ according to the aforementioned reaction R4 is replaced by the reactor indicated with NEW in FIG. 7, preferably a regen-

erative thermal reactor, wherein the process according to the present invention is carried out and from which SO₂ is in any case obtained.

[0074] The following advantages of this revamp are obtained: besides the sulfuric acid production, the revamp allows to obtain syngas associated with CO₂ abatement, which have a considerable economic value.

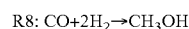
[0075] Purification of Natural Gas

[0076] Natural gas is extracted by gases wells in the form of a gas or a volatile product released by liquid masses or porous solids. In any case it is a mixture of the so called light and volatile hydrocarbon compounds, in part defined as incondensable (i.e. methane) because of their very low condensation temperature. Very often natural gas contains a more or less marked presence of H₂S and CO₂ according to the location of the specific deposit. For example Kashgan site in Kazakhstan, one of the world largest gas natural deposit, has an elevated amount of H₂S (about 20% on the total natural gas content). Therefore the need is felt to purify natural gases from CO₂ and H₂S and the most known technology to remove these contaminants is the amine sweetening (washing) previously mentioned.

[0077] Once separated from natural gas, these compounds are often re-injected in the deposits because of the impossibility of a removal thereof. The process of the invention is particularly attractive for sequestering and converting CO₂ and H₂S coming also from different streams and processes, thereby producing syngas as well as elemental sulfur in case the invention is integrated with sulfur recovery units. The process of the invention is even more attractive in case the deposits are already provided with amine washing columns, which the reactor, preferably a regenerative thermal reactor, to carry out the process according to the present invention may be connected to.

[0078] 4. Production Unit Integrated in a Production Unit for Producing Methanol.

[0079] The invention allows to produce syngas for methanol synthesis occurring according to the overall reaction (Manenti et al., Considerations on the Steady-state Modeling of Methanol Synthesis Fixed-Bed Reactor, Chemical Engineering Science, 66(2), 152-162, 2011):



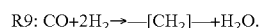
[0080] This synthesis requires elevated pressures (from 80 bar on) and H₂/CO ratios higher than 2 (preferably higher than 3-4) to obtain yields of 6-7% (yields of the industrial processes). An independent operating unit comprising a reactor, preferably a regenerative thermal reactor, to carry out the process according to the present invention allows to obtain syngas to be used in methanol production.

[0081] FIG. 8 reports a scheme of an operating unit for example to produce methanol according to Lurgi, Casale and Davy Process Technology (Manenti et al., Considerations on the Steady-state Modeling of Methanol Synthesis Fixed-Bed Reactor, Chemical Engineering Science, 66(2), 152-162, 2011). In the synthesis reaction of methanol also CO₂ is involved (reverse water gas shift reaction), that, together with unconverted syngas, may be recycled upward the methanol reactor and/or the reactor, indicated with "NEW" in the figure, to carry out of the process of the invention, preferably a regenerative thermal reactor.

[0082] An alternative operating unit to carry out the process of the invention integrated with Claus operating unit may be also encompassed to be associated with a methanol plant production.

[0083] 5. Gas to Liquid Production of Gasolines and Gas-oils

[0084] Syngas is the starting reactant of Fischer Tropsch gas-to-liquid processes. In these processes, syngas is transformed into hydrocarbon compounds with progressively longer chains (indicated with the single unit-[CH₂]-according to the overall reaction:

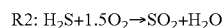


[0085] Therefore syngas prepared with the process according to the present invention in the reactor NEW and purified by passing it through the 4 separation sections September 1-September 4 may be used as starting reactant in the Fischer Tropsch gas-to-liquid process as reported in FIG. 9.

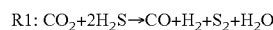
[0086] Coal Gasification

[0087] The process of the invention allows to obtain syngas as a support for coal gasification according to what reported in FIG. 10. Coal gasification reactor receives coal, steam and oxygen as reactants to produce syngas. Gasification by products are CO₂ and H₂S (due to the presence of sulfur in loaded coal) and may be fed at the reactor NEW, preferably a regenerative thermal reactor, wherein the process according to the present invention is carried out, thereby increasing coal syngas production.

1. A process for producing synthesis gas (syngas) comprising the endothermic reaction between CO₂ and H₂S, wherein the energetic supply is provided by the exothermic oxidation of a portion of H₂S to SO₂ according to the following reaction scheme:



said process being carried out according to the following overall theoretical reaction scheme R1, not taking into account the aforementioned exothermic reaction R2,



wherein the amount of fed oxygen is comprised between 5% and 25% by volume over the total volume of fed reactants gaseous mixture.

2. The process according to claim 1 wherein the amount of fed oxygen is comprised between 5% and 15%, when regeneration is very effective.

3. The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction temperature is comprised between 850 and 1550° C. for residence times comprised between 0.1 s and 3 s.

4. The process according to claim 3, wherein said temperature reaction is comprised between 1300 and 1550° C. to obtain the maximum conversion of CO₂ and H₂S.

5. The process according to claim 3 wherein the temperature reaction is comprised between 850° C. and 1100° C. to obtain a synthesis gas with higher H₂/CO ratios.

6. The process according to claim 1, being carried out in a production unit comprising:

a reactor,

at least one separation section of the various components of the gaseous mixture leaving said thermal/regenerative reactor, and

at least one section for recycling the unconverted H₂S and CO₂.

7. The process according to claim 6, wherein said reactor is a regenerative thermal flow reactor or a thermal reactor.

8. The process according to claim 7, wherein said regenerative thermal flow reactor comprises:

a) a regenerative section being a tubular PFR, in which fed gases are preheated and through which gases pass with a turbulent flow

b) a thermal section, being a PFR, in which the reactions R1 and R2 take place and through which gases pass with a turbulent flow,

said regenerative thermal reactor being optionally provided downstream with a waste heat boiler.

9. The process according to claim 7 wherein said thermal reactor is a PFR, through which gases pass with a turbulent flow.

10. The process according to claim 8 wherein said waste heat boiler receives the gases leaving the reactor and said gases cool down at the tube side while generating medium-high pressure at the shell side.

11. The process according to claim 6, wherein the effluent of the reactor is purified in a separation section that comprises:

a first separation section wherein sulfur is separated by cooling from the gaseous mixture and collected in a suitable tank;

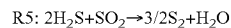
a second separation section wherein the gaseous mixture leaving said first separation section and comprising CO, H₂, H₂O, SO₂ and CO₂ and unconverted H₂S and possibly nitrogen, in case the process is carried out in the presence of air, is cooled down to allow the separation of water by condensation,

a possible third separation section, wherein SO₂ is separated from the gaseous mixture by washing or chemical conversion,

a fourth separation section wherein the mixture leaving said third separation section and comprising H₂S, CO₂, CO and H₂ is washed to separate the synthesis gas from the reactants not yet converted, which are recovered and then recycled at the reactor,

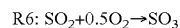
said separation sections being able to be combined or integrated with one another.

12. The process according to claim 6, wherein the gases entering the reactor are H₂S, O₂ or air and CO₂ and wherein the gases leaving said reactor are cooled in a boiler for steam recovery and then sent to a first condenser of a Claus unit for sulfur recovery, in a sulfur pit, whereas the gases leaving said condenser are sent to a catalytic conversion section, where the following reaction takes place:

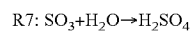


said catalytic conversion section comprising at least 1 catalytic converter and arranged in succession and spaced by at least 1 condenser to allow the partial recovery of sulfur, formed in each converter, said sulfur being conveyed into the aforementioned sulfur pit, and the gaseous mixture leaving the last condenser of said catalytic conversion section and comprising CO, H₂, CO₂, H₂S and possibly nitrogen, pass through a hydrogenation reactor and a quenching tower, and then to a solvent washing column, wherein said gaseous mixture was washed with amines to recover the unconverted CO₂ and H₂S at the top of a stripper and recycled at the thermal/regenerative reactor, whereas the synthesis gas is recovered at the top of said solvent washing column.

13. The process according to claim 6, wherein SO_2 coming from the third separation section is sent to a reactor R7 where the following reaction is carried out



and SO_3 thus formed and leaving the reactor R7 is reacted in the presence of water in the reactor R8 to give sulfuric acid according to the following reaction scheme:



14. The process according to claim 6, wherein syngas leaving the fourth separation section is conveyed to a production unit for producing methanol.

15. The process according to claim 6, wherein the reactants CO_2 and H_2S come from natural gas deposits.

16. The process according to claim 6, wherein syngas leaving the fourth separation section is sent to a production unit for producing gasoline and gasoil through the gas-to-liquid Fischer Tropsch process.

17. The process according to claim 6, wherein the reactants CO_2 and H_2S come totally or in part from a coal gasification unit.

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